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THE LAST CLIPPER

saw Pericles pace away watch after watch of that night, without relief, he doubted that he could be the real head devil that he had called himself. And his doubt grew until, as six bells of the middle watch rang through the Gloaming and a cloud darkened a half-moon's light, he hurled a skull-smashing iron belaying pin straight at Pericles' head.

Before the doubter could move from where he pretended to be asleep on the main hatch the head devil was bending over him, a cold hand on his heart. And out of the corner of his eye the doubter watched that hand touch and pass on from one to the other of his companions, who were really asleep. Then his doubt changed to fearful amazement; for a voice that called him Thomas suddenly whispered very close to his ear: "You're a very, very foolish person!"

AS day was breaking Sears, refreshed by ten hours' straight sleep, came from below to relieve his mate. He discovered Pericles standing against the lee mizzen rigging, his whole mind apparently given to the gang hystoning the main deck below him. Directly over Pericles' head on the cro'jackyard lay a sailor named Jake at a marlinspike task.

In the second that Sears apprehended this scene that marlinspike sped downward from Jake's hands at Pericles' head. But before Sears could utter a cry of warning the Gloaming's new mate had stepped aside, and with a strange laugh was ordering Jake, whom, to Sears' wonderment, he called Thomas, down from aloft.

"You're another imitation devil," he went on to the slowly descending sailor. "I knew what you would do when I gave you that nice new marlinspike and sent you up there. I'd have had you when you flung the belaying pin, only that Italian fellow down there smokes too much. He has a tobacco heart. I was beating nearly as hard as yours when I felt it."

The sailor's pallor took on a tinge of green. He cringed in terror as his feet touched the deck.

"Brace up! I'm not going to kill you; though somebody'll have to some day. Just going to give you a bath—cool you off. Only imitation devils get hot."

Seizing him and tripping him at this, Pericles tied the end of the mizzen royal halyards round his waist and pushed him over the rail. And then, for the moment forgetting that he was not commander of the Gloaming, but only her mate, he turned to Sears and said:

"You may haul him in if you or three minutes, Sir. Tie him up in two or three don't care. I'm going to turn in."

IT was on the morning of the seventh day after this that the clipper Gloaming, under tops'ls, went hurling her snaky length out of the westward in a bee line toward the Straits of Juan de Fuca, the entrance to Puget Sound. A hundred miles to the eastward lay her destination. Half a gale was blowing—a rare thing for June. But it had been sweeping the coast the last three days.

Aft stood Bobby Sears, his face clean-shaven now, no longer a scarecrow, gazing at a big white liner with a fiddlehead bow where she drove by on a parallel course half a mile under the Gloaming's lee. Her three yellow funnels, belching black smoke, told what went on in her bowels.

"Well, she's drawing by us now," said Sears, turning and walking up to windward where Pericles was standing with his eyes aloft. "But we've done pretty well at that to hold her down for half an hour—and with nothing set above tops'ls."

Pericles' eyes dropped, picked up Sears' gaze, and carried it to the liner, brought it back again, and sent it along the Gloaming's three snugly furled topgallantsails. Not a word did the bronzed giant utter; but Sears understood.

"Yes!" he cried. "She'll stand up to it with her thousand tons of ballast!" His face glowed. "I know she will! We'll take her in as she ought to go, leading the way! Let her have the t'gallants'ls!"

By the way that Pericles O'Brien leaped forward at this, and by the orders that volleyed from him to a made-over, regenerated crew, Sears knew that he had not mistaken the message he had snatched from his friend's gray eyes.

And for the next five hours and until the Gloaming stood into soundings the liner's company had an opportunity to study the delicate naval architecture that dominated the formation of the counter and stern of a clipper. Once or twice it became necessary to pursue the study with the aid of glasses. This was when the gale piped up and the

Gloaming fled away like a homing loon.

But the liner's folk were more than generous when they passed the Gloaming where she had to heave to for a pilot. Her crowded rails gave her three times three cheers and a tiger. Her gold-braided skipper bared his gray head and leaned out from his bridge to shout, "God bless you, old ship! God bless you!" Her young chief officer on the fo'c'sle head halted the work of getting his mooring lines ready for port to yell, with no less sentiment than had moved his commander, "What is she? Twin screw or triple?" "Quadruple turbine!" Pericles flung at him with a laugh.

On the opposite side of the Gloaming where the Sound pilotboat lay still others were cheering and welcoming her. But some of the cheers were for the man who climbed her side to guide her into Seattle. A young fellow he was, no older than Sears, and he had won his chance to do this thing from a pool that had been formed the day the telegraph had carried the news that the Gloaming had arrived off the Heads of San Francisco and sailed for the Sound.

"We've been on the lookout for you the last five days!" exclaimed the pilot boyishly as he tumbled over the rail and met Sears. Then his professional eye read what he thought was the answer for the delay in the Gloaming's white decks, the newly tarred shrouds and backstays, and the signs of fresh paint and glistening brass work. "Just what I said you'd do!" he added enthusiastically. "Keep her out till you'd put her in shape, no matter if they are going to cut her down into an oil tank barge. This is sea history—all this, Capt'n Sears!"

WHEREUPON Sears' eyes went searching for Pericles, who had thoughtfully slipped away at the pilot's appearance. As he discovered him on the opposite side of the deck the giant called him.

"Look at that bridge out there, Bob," he said, giving Sears a pair of glasses and pointing to where a tramp wallowed up from the south. "See if you can see anybody you know."

"My grandfather!" exclaimed Sears at the first glance.

"Yes, Father Israel," and Pericles jumped from his side to hail the pilotboat and ask her please to bring the old sea king from the tramp to the Gloaming.

"Blowing a gale when I brought that brute out o' San Francisco—so hard that I couldn't get off to the Lady Mine. An' just had to come along!" Father Israel was telling his grandson and Pericles a little while later on the Gloaming's poop. "So after all 'mine eyes have seen'—the last clipper."

At that moment the local pilot summoned young Sears forward, and as Father Israel watched him go he added:

"And they've seen me, Pericles,—my boy that she has brought home a man!"

"Every inch of one, Father, every inch!" answered Pericles. "And thanks to him and thanks to you I've had the bulkiest, the best, vacation of my life!"

"Ear 'im, pals! Ear 'im!" exclaimed a runt of a Cockney sailor, dropping a line on which he was hauling and staring agape at Pericles. "Hit's 'is vykyshun—'is vykyshun the bruish' bligher's been 'aving! Oh, Gawd syve us from bein' roundabouts w'en 'e's working for bread an' butter!"

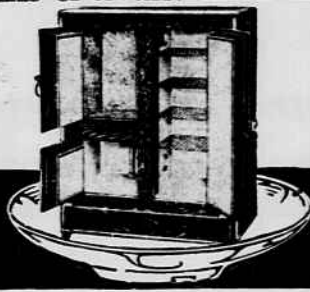
BUOYANCY OF FRESH AND SALT WATER

A CHINESE lad dropped his ball in a narrow hole and could not get it out. So he poured water in the hole, thinking that he would float the ball to the surface. As the ball was slightly heavier than water, it remained on the bottom. Then he thought of mixing salt with the water, as he knew that salt water would float denser objects than fresh. This he did, and was rewarded with the floating ball.

This particular fact is demonstrated at the mouths of rivers. Objects rolling along the bottom of a fresh river, too heavy to come to the top, will rise when they are carried out to sea. The general rule also applies to floating bodies. For instance, a ship with a cargo on the sea will sink sometimes a foot on entering a fresh water port. On the other hand, if she leaves a fresh water port with her cargo, she will rise when entering the ocean. So a ship may be loaded apparently too much at a wharf and still be all right on the waves.

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